

IN THE CLAIMS

Listing of Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.-47. (Cancelled)

48. (Currently Amended) A mass production method for manufacturing successive spherical glass articles, in each of which is accommodated a three-dimensional object or figurine, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a container with a mass of molten glass, the container including [[a]] at least one discharge opening through which liquid glass can be delivered;

(b) providing a plurality of thermally resistant figurines; and

(c) repeating the following steps ~~(d)-(h)~~ (d)-(j) for successively enclosing a figurine in glass;

(d) dividing the liquid glass delivered via the at least one discharge opening into successive first portions;

(e) guiding the first portions into a first mold part;

(f) ~~wholly enclosing~~ positioning at least one figurine on or at least partially in the first portion of glass guided into the first mold part;

(g) dividing liquid glass delivered via at least one discharge opening into successive second portions;

(h) guiding the second portions into a second mold part positioned adjacent the first mold part, thereby forming a glass mass with the at least one figurine enclosed therein;

~~(g)~~ (i) removing the formed glass mass from the mold first and second mold parts;
and

~~(h)~~ (j) modeling the mass to a spherical form by omnidirectional rolling for a time, together with simultaneous cooling, such that the mass solidifies and forms the spherical article.

49. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48, wherein the figurines are preheated.

50. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 48, further comprising the steps of:

providing ~~[[a]]~~ the first mold with part as a substantially hemispherical bottom, and the second mold part as a substantially hemispherical cover ~~for placing on and removing therefrom~~;

pouring ~~[[a]]~~ the first portion of glass onto the bottom;

placing the cover thereon and pressing the enclosed portion of glass; and

removing the cover.

51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 50, further comprising the step of providing a plurality of concave rollers, together which bound a round passage opening.

52. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 51, wherein the rollers include partially spherical cavities for co-acting in register positions during rotation.

53. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50, further comprising the step of pouring [[a]] the second portion of glass onto the first portion of glass and the figurine.

54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48, wherein cooling of the spherical article takes place by progressing the article through a temperature path from an annealing temperature to a strain temperature, such that cooling occurs in a substantially stress-free manner.

55. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 54, further comprising the steps of:

additionally annealing the article by fully heating the form to remove internal stresses; and

subsequently and slowly cooling the article.

56. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 55, wherein the article is slowly cooled to about 50°C.

57. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 48, further comprising the division step (d) is performed by cutting through the glass flow ~~between two figurines~~.

58. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 57, wherein the cutting occurs by use of two plates having co-acting, generally concave and substantially V-shaped cutting edges.

59. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48, wherein the modeling step (h) is performed by a first roller having a recessed helical groove with a smooth, round form, wherein the roller is rotatable at a first peripheral speed and co-acts with a second roller rotatable at a second peripheral speed differing from the first peripheral speed, wherein the second roller is smooth, provided with a helical groove, or any combination thereof.

60. (Cancelled)

61. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 48, ~~wherein, in steps (d)-(h), the portions are guided into a mold, which comprises one of~~ further comprising providing a plurality of molds first and second mold sets for successively holding successive glass portions therein.

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62. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 61, wherein steps (d)-(h) and ~~(e)~~ are repeated for ~~[[a]]~~ the plurality of molds mold sets prior to ~~steps (f)-(h)~~ step (i).

63.-71. (Cancelled)